The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 96, Vol. viii.] BELFAST, DECEMBER 1st, 1888. [For Gratuitous Circulation.

TO OUR READERS AND FRIENDS.

With our present issue the publication of the *Chronicle and Index* will cease. It has been published regularly for eight years, and it has been circulated gratuitously all that time. Nearly a hundred thousand copies have been printed and circulated. Some kind friends, especially from various parts of England, have from time to time sent voluntary contributions towards the cost of publication; and many have, by spoken word or written letter, expressed their satisfaction in perusing its pages from month to month. The editor has found pleasure in preparing the matter for each succeeding number, and he lays down his agreeable task with reluctance and regret. But the Society under whose auspices the periodical has been published has come to the conclusion that, for the present at least, its issue must cease. The reasons which have influenced them are not simply those of a financial nature. In this respect the Society has very little cause of complaint. But there has been so little co-operation in supplying matter for its pages, in taking active and personal measures to extend its circulation, or in avowed interest in its aims and work, that both the editor and the Society have come to the conclusion that they will no longer issue the journal. They regret this step very much, and not least because there will now be no regular publication in connection with our churches in Ireland. We are few and scattered, and some literary bond of union is necessary. The responsibility of publishing such an organ must now devolve upon others, and the present editor and the members of the Unitarian Society will be ready to give all the assistance in their power.

It has been the aim of the *Chronicle* to give an insight into the work undertaken and done by our various churches in Ireland, to record the progress of religious thought and the development of religious life in the world, to stimulate and inspire efforts for the social and moral well-being of mankind, and to promote a kindly and loving feeling among all whom it could reach. Its agency has been among the smallest, and it has accomplished but little. Nevertheless it has had its mission and done its humble work, and there will be not a few who will again and again turn back to its pages to refresh their memories with its records for the past eight years. There will be a few bound copies of the entire publication, and application must be made for them speedily. Names should be sent in at once. It is not possible as yet to announce what the price of the volume will be.

And now to all our readers and friends we say farewell, and bid them God-speed.

The Rev. J. C. Street acknowledges with thanks the receipt of the following subscriptions in aid of the gratuitous publication of the *Chronicle and Index*;—

J. Troup, London,	...	£0 10 0
Anon, Belfast,	...	0 2 6

Any one desirous of having for distribution tracts bearing on the various phases of Unitarianism may have them on applying to Rev. J. C. Street, 16, Queen's Arcade, Belfast.

Since our last issue the Rev. J. C. Street has addressed large audiences on Sunday evenings. His subjects have been as follows:—

1. John Ward, Preacher. Part 2.
2. One of the Modern Devils (Hypocrisy).
3. Another Modern Devil (Drunkenness).
4. The Casting out of Devils.
5. Ministering Angels.

The Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association has had a vigorous session so far; and with the exception of one night, when the weather was too inclement to allow of a full meeting, the attendance has been large and encouraging. The papers on "Is Atheism Logical?" "Money," and "Thomas Payne," were all exceedingly interesting and able, and the discussions which followed were animated and searching. The members have all felt that it was good for them to be at the meetings.

The Progressive Society, the formation of which we recorded last month, continues to attract a good deal of attention, and is undoubtedly doing a solid amount of good work. It is exciting many to think seriously on religious and social problems, and is showing that beneath diversity of opinion may be found a real unity of purpose for the betterment of the life and lot of mankind. We trust it has a long and vigorous career before it.

FROM CHRISTIAN TO POSITIVIST.

PERSONAL CONFESSIONS BY MR. FREDERIC HARRISON.

In an apology for the Positivist faith in the new number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Frederic Harrison writes as follows:—"If one may be forgiven for a simple bit of autobiography, the truth is, that like so many of my colleagues and friends, I was myself brought up as an orthodox Churchman, in a religious home, with unusual attention to a Christian education. Till manhood I was accustomed to continual study of the Bible, of ecclesiastical history, biography, and exposition; to daily prayer, constant communion, and to familiarity with all great books of sacred poetry and prose. I assimilated all this with the whole mind and the whole heart; nor do I suppose that there was any part of the ordinary Christian's hopes and fears which I did not experience or which I was unable to feel. As I came to manhood it slowly dawned upon me that the whole dogmatic basis of belief on which this religious frame of mind once rested had melted away as imperceptibly as the sun melts out of the western sky. I woke up to find that the whole of my religious sentiments, habits, and consolations had been built upon a vast sub-structure of gratuitous assumptions, without a vestige of solid proof. I passed through the ordinary stages of Broad Church, no Church, Spirit of the Gospel, Natural Theology, Ontological haze, Philosophical Theism, the Eternal-not-ourselves-that-makes-for righteousness, the Unknowable, and most of the other substitutes for the Prayer-Book and the Bible, seeking rest and finding none; and a hollow, dismal, and shifting country did I find it. All this time I had been reading Comte; and, after some ten years of continual study, I slowly came to find solid ground in his conception of Humanity as a practical Providence, and in the Service of Man as the practical sum of religion. And now so much of my earlier religious habits and emotions—habits and emotions from which Unitarianism, Theism, the Eternal-not-ourselves, and the Unknowable, had turned in chilling disdain—began to have new life and to acquire a new meaning. My Dante, my Imitation, my Jeremy Taylor, my Wordsworth, and my Milton became again full of religious consolation and power. I read my Bible with an even deeper zest than before. Religion ceased to be a Sunday exercise or an Ontological puzzle. The sense of Providence, of a life beyond the grave, of sin as treason against Providence, of the helplessness and dependence of the individual soul, of the duty of working with the Providence on which each life depends, of religion as entering naturally into every act of life, all this came back to me in a real and solid form, resting on perfectly clear and certain explanations of human life. I was no longer without religion. I had found it in a form, fuller, larger, richer, and more glowing."

"So then the true worship of God is to become that which we worship; to draw nearer to Him as the Sun whence light and purity and wisdom and power stream into our souls. It is not to tremble before Him, but to have the joy and boldness and humility of love, and to do His will because we are certain it is for the perfection of the race of man. It is to bear all that comes upon us of suffering or of trial, knowing that what is borne is for the use and good of the whole of humanity. It is always to believe in His order and His love, and to abide patiently the end. It is to feel His quickening life within us, making us immortal; and to do the works meet for immortality. It is to be impassioned for more and more of Him within us. It is by Purity to see Him, by Love to dwell in Him, by Truth to know Him, in Reverence to understand Him, in Humility to rejoice in Him, in Joy to abide in His work, in Power to do His work—and in all to know and be ravished by His everlasting beauty."—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

MOHAMMEDANS ON CHRISTIANITY.

Last winter Canon Taylor, whose defence of Mohammedans at the Church Congress had created such a sensation, went to Egypt in order to study Islamism in its headquarters. When there he was surprised to find that he was well-known by name and fame to the native gentlemen, who freely held long discussions with him on Mohammedan faith and practice, and put much valuable information at his disposal. In his *Leaves from an Egyptian Note Book* (Kegan, Paul, Trench, and Co.), the Canon gives the substance of the conversations, together with lively sketches of Egyptian life. The impression one gathers from the volume is that on the whole the average Mohammedan is a truly estimable person, who will compare very favourably indeed with the average Christian. In the streets of Cairo foot-passengers make way for each other with the utmost politeness; drunkenness is rare, the police are invisible and are not wanted, 'and you look in vain for any exhibition of the surliness, ruffianism, and brutality of Western cities. Religion seems to exert at Cairo a greater binding moral force than it does on the conduct of the labouring classes in London, Paris, or Berlin. It restrains men from evil, and tends to make them kindly, virtuous, and moral. Moslems certainly do endeavour to practise in their daily lives the precepts of gentleness, benevolence, and forgiveness of injuries, which are so constantly inculcated in the Koran.' It is a 'ludicrous misconception of the facts' to assert that a Mohammedan's education begins and ends with the Koran. One pasha Canon Taylor visited put down Barthélemy St. Hilaire's work on Buddha and his religion, and Renan's 'Vie de Jesus' was on the table, and on the bookshelves Darwin and Herbert Spencer were represented side by side with Arabian mathematicians and philosophers. Another talked intelligently on the higher mathematics, being well acquainted with the latest works on the science, and he confessed that 'he had no higher intellectual pleasure than the solution of problems in the differential calculus. As to polygamy, it is practically non-existent in Egypt. With the labouring classes it is very exceptional, and an informant who knew all, or nearly all, the pashas in Cairo affirmed that 95 per cent. of them have only one wife, and the proportion is increasing. The harem is by no means the centre of immorality it is sometimes supposed to be. Its inmates consist largely of dependent female relatives of the pasha or his wife, whom it is his sacred duty to protect, with their numerous attendants. The women are treated with the greatest possible respect. A learned Moslem, talking upon Islamism and Christianity remarked, 'Let us talk the matter over, and you will see in how many things we agree and in how few we differ. Doubtless there are things we shall have to give up. We have added many things'—traditions and commentaries—'to the purity of our revealed Scriptures; but you have done the same. Our religion, like yours, has been corrupted. Many of our popular beliefs and practices have no more support from the Koran than the image-worship and Mariolatry of Christians have in the New Testament. If we return to the pure teaching of Mohammed, and you return to the pure teaching of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, we

shall find few points of difference to divide us. *Your Primitive Christianity we accept*, but,' he went on after this startling statement, 'Mohammedans reject the superstitions with which Christianity was corrupted after the Apostolic age.' 'They accept,' adds Canon Taylor, 'the New Testament; but, like the Protestant sects, they claim the right of putting their own interpretation on it. They repudiate altogether such modern formularies as the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Westminster Confession, or the Tridentine decrees.' It would seem that the more intelligent Mohammedans are a good deal better Christians than some who loudly proclaim themselves to be the only true Christians.—*Christian World.*

TANGLED TALK.

There can be no doubt that the "Autobiography of Mark Rutherford" is a remarkable book, and one which ought to be read by all interested in spiritual problems and in the analysis of character. Among other true things in it, it contains a wonderfully vivid description of the horrors of hypochondria. How truly terrible is this experience:—"For months, many months, this dreadful conviction of coming idiocy or insanity lay upon me like some poisonous reptile with its fangs driven into my very marrow, so that I could not shake it off. It went with me wherever I went; it got up with me in the morning, walked about with me all day, and lay down with me at night. I managed somehow or other to do my work, but I prayed incessantly for death, and to such a state was I reduced that I could not even make the commonest appointment for a day beforehand. The mere knowledge that something had to be done agitated me and prevented my doing it. In June next year, my holiday came, and I went away home to my father's house. I went with them to Ilfracombe. I had been there about a week when, on one memorable morning, on the top of one of those Devonshire hills, I became aware of a kind of flush on the brain and a momentary relief such as I had not known since that November night. I seemed, far away on the horizon, to see just a rim of olive light low down under the edge of the leaden cloud that hung over my head, a prophecy of the restoration of the sun, or at least a witness that somewhere it shone. It was not permanent, and perhaps the gloom was never more profound nor the agony more intense than it was for long after my Ilfracombe visit. But the light broadened, and gradually the darkness was mitigated."

The author's advice to all who suffer from this most depressing malady is that, as it almost always has its seat in physical conditions of some organ of the body—stomach, liver, or kidneys—to have patience, not to get excited with fears, not to dread the evil which most probably will never arise, but to sit down quietly and wait. But, this is just what the patient, or rather, we should say, the impatient, one finds it difficult to do. This further advice is, however, more practical:—"The simpler and less stimulating the diet, the more likely it is that the sufferer will be able to watch through the wakeful hours without delirium, and the less likely is it that the general health will be impaired. Upon this point of health too much stress cannot be laid."

There is nothing so mysterious in this mysterious world than this connection between soul and body, and in this book, which, I repeat, is one for all spiritual thinkers, that connection is constantly recurring to the author. We find it, for example, in his thoughts about immortality. He has been telling us that he had long seen the absurdity and impossibility of the ordinary theories of heaven and hell. "I could not," he goes on to say, "give up my hope in a continuance of life beyond the grave; but the moment I came to ask myself how, I was involved in contradictions. Immortality is not really immortality of the person unless the memory abides, and there be a connection of the self of the next world with the self here, and it was incredible to me that there should be any memories or any such connection after the dissolution of the body; moreover, the soul, whatever it may be, is so intimately one with the body, and is affected so seriously by the weaknesses, passions, and prejudices of the body, that without it my soul would not be myself, and the fable of the resurrection of the

body of this same brain and heart was more than I could ever swallow in my most orthodox days.

"But the greatest difficulty was the inability to believe that the Almighty intended to preserve all the mass of human beings, all the countless millions of barbaric half-brutal forms which, since the appearance of man, had wandered upon the earth, savage or civilised. It is unlike Nature's way to be so careful about individuals, and is it to be supposed that, having produced, millions of years ago, a creature scarcely nobler than the animals he tore with his fingers, she should take pains to maintain him in existence for evermore? The law of the universe everywhere is rather the perpetual rise from the lower to the higher; an immortality of aspiration after more perfect types; a suppression and happy forgetfulness of its comparative failures. There was, nevertheless, an obstacle to the acceptance of this negation in a faintness of heart which I could not overcome. Why this ceaseless struggle, if in a few short years I was to be asleep for ever? The position of mortal man seemed to me infinitely tragic. He is born into the world, beholds its grandeur and beauty, is filled with unquenchable longings, and knows that in a few inevitable revolutions of the earth he will cease. More painful still, he loves somebody, man or woman, with a surpassing devotion; he is so lost in his love that he cannot endure a moment without it; and when he sees it pass away in death, he is told that it is extinguished—that that heart and mind absolutely are *not*."

Such are some of the tremendous questions touched upon in this book, which is also full of subtle spiritual and intellectual analysis of character. There are times when these questions press heavily upon us. The more we think of these problems, the more inscrutable they seem to become. It is indeed, as Keble somewhere says, with an earth-palsied arm that we knock at the gate of heaven. And it is a relief to know that here upon this earth there are certain definite duties for us to do, in the doing of which we will find our highest life, and these consist in endeavouring to hasten the advent of the glorious time for which our Saviour prayed when He turned His great, beautiful, blessed eyes up to His Father and said—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

And it is for this reason that I welcome such books as Mr. Walter Besant's "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" and "The Children of Gibeon," and such a capital little volume as that published by the Longmans, in which, under the title of "Practical Socialism," the Rev. Samuel A. Barrett, the vicar of Whitechapel, and his wife give such touching pictures of the condition of the poor in that notorious district, and in East London generally, and such admirable practical advice. If the people were more alive to the wretchedness and misery in their midst, at their own doors and the doors of their churches, although churches have a bad habit of following the rich and genteel—a habit which cannot be too strongly reprobated—there would be less cry for the teaching of mere doctrine such as drove Mark Rutherford from his pulpit.

In regard to this, Mr. Barrett says:—"It is this practice of living in pleasant places which impoverishes the poor. It authorises, as it were, a lower standard of life for the neighbourhoods in which the poor are left; it encourages a contempt for a home which is narrow; it leaves large quarters of the town without the light which comes from knowledge, and large masses of the people without the friendship of those better taught than themselves. The precept that 'everyone should live over his shop' has a very direct bearing on life, and it is to the absence of so many from their shops, be the shop 'the land' or 'a factory,' which makes so many others poorer."

He goes on to say:—"The unquestioned habit by which everyone thinks himself justified in getting the most for his money tends to make poverty. In the competition which the habit provokes many are trampled under foot, and in the search after enjoyment wealth is wasted which would support thousands in comfort. The habits of the people are in the charge of the Church, so that by its ministers (Conformist and Nonconformist) God's Spirit may

bend the most stubborn will. Those ministers have a great responsibility. God's Spirit has been imprisoned in phrases about the duty of contentment and the sin of drink; the stubborn will has been strengthened by the doctor's opinion as to the necessity of living apart from the worry of work, and by the teaching of a political economy which assumes that a man's might is a man's right. The ministers who would change the habits of the rich will have to preach the prophet's message about the duty of giving and the sin of luxury, and to denounce ways of business now pronounced to be respectable and Christian. Old teaching will have to be put in a new language, giving shown to consist in sharing, and earning to be sacrifice. For some time it may be the glory of a preacher to empty, rather than to fill, his church, as he reasons about the judgment to come, when twopence a gross to the matchmakers will be laid alongside of the 22 per cent. to the shareholders, and penny dinners for the poor compared with the 16 courses for the rich, when the 'seamy' side of wealth and pleasures will be exposed. For some time the ministers who would change habits may fail to attract congregations. It is not until they are able again to lift up the God whose presence is dimly felt, and whose nature is misunderstood, that they will succeed. In the knowledge of God is eternal life. When all know God as the Father who requires rich and poor to be perfect sharers in His gifts of virtue, forgiveness, and peace, then none will be satisfied until they are at one with Him, and His habit has become their habit."

May you and I, my reader, do what we can to hasten the coming of that blessed time! —*Glasgow Weekly Citizen.*

Orion.

THE MORALS OF A DIPLOMATIST.

Lord Lytton's Rectorial Address to the Glasgow students was concerned with the institution of a contrast between the morality proper to the conduct of nations and that proper to the conduct of individuals. It was intended to confute the doctrine that national conquest is equivalent to private robbery, and war to murder. It, therefore, sought to establish a distinction between the morality of public and that of private actions; and, as illustrations thereof, appealed to Jewish history, to the general treatment of barbarous nations by civilised ones, and to the apparently universal conviction that self-sacrifice, which is clearly recognised as a duty of individuals, is, at all events when carried to the point of self-extinction, not to be expected of nations. The grounds of this distinction he found, first of all, in the differences existing between the two subjects of the alleged separate systems of private and public morals. The aggregate 'self' of a nation differs from the 'self' of an individual, and implies duties of the several members of the nation to one another. The nation, too, has a continuity of existence denied to the individual; its identity in successive periods of time is never as true in fact as is the individual's; and its legal rights may be affected by changed circumstances in ways that an individual's are not. Subsequent events, for instance, affect the validity of an international treaty, but they do not affect the validity of a marriage-settlement. The personification of a nation as 'she' is apt to make people overlook these differences, and, in Lord Lytton's opinion, called for a special reminder of them. Now, the morals of individuals and communities alike consist of rights and duties, and coincide, if anywhere, within the sphere of justice, whose declared obligations form a system of law. Is it possible, then, to codify international law? To this Lord Lytton in effect answers 'No.' You cannot have strict law without a common superior; and any such condition is inconsistent with the existence of independent nations. The word 'law' in the phrase 'international law' differs from what we mean by it in such phrases as 'the law of Scotland.' International law is only operative where small questions are at stake. It is only on a par with some code of social etiquette, and does not hold back nations from trials of strength on those questions that menace their permanent interests. Yet, as far as its goes, international law represents the greatest effort ever made by

man towards the accomplishment of a concrete expression of justice in the matter of public morals. It has, however, been evolved by judges who cannot be believed to have been altogether blind to the interests of their own countries in the process of its enunciation. The function of such law is persuasive rather than judicial, its justice depending on the weight of the arguments by which certain countries can persuade other countries to submit to it. Of the ordinary sanctions of morality, only one, viz., that of prudence—or regard to the national consequences of actions—obtains between nations. War is not a sanction analogous to the procedure of a court of law; for the consequences of the latter are, while those of the former are not, definitely related to the original matter that was tried. The conclusion arrived at is that there is no sanction of public morals. Hence the public actions of a public man, like Napoleon Buonaparte, are not to be judged as if they were those of a private person. When he kidnapped, and, after a sham trial, executed the Duke d'Enghien, he did not, according to Lord Lytton, commit murder in the ordinary sense, although the deed was worse than that done in many ordinary murders. Such is the light in which Lord Lytton's career as a diplomatist has taught him to regard the obligations between nation and nation, and such the code of public morals which, as Lord Rector, he holds up for the enlightenment of the young manhood of Scotland!—*Christian World.*

AT-ONE-MENT.

ONE WITH GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"One the strain that lips of thousands
Lift as from the heart of one,
One the conflict, one the peril,
One the march in God begun."

Such were Christ's own words, repeated again and again: "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things"—and such forever must be the words of the true prophet and Son of God. And at the same time he gave his hearers the touchstone of Truth, whereby they might assay his words—that conviction of conscience which grows out of experience: "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And again: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

Such a doctrine of practical belief was most unpalatable to the professors of a priestly supremacy, and the Pharisees asked, with indignation, "Are we blind also?" The answer echoes across the centuries for all who would substitute dead dogma for living Faith: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Never was there a more terrible denunciation of ecclesiastical sterility. "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

Wonderful teaching, this—so direct, so authoritative. What wonder that the common people loved him, and said one to the other, "He speaketh as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." Not one word here of a sacrifice for sin by the shedding of blood—not one word of the substitution of sin by the doing of death—no, a grander, nobler message—a truer, higher inspiration—the promise of perfection to all who became obedient to the perfect will of God, the proclamation of divine power for all who struggled against sin, the exhortation which shall never die: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect!"

Never were truer words than the scornful sarcasm spoken to the Scribes and Pharisees—the professors of religion, falsely so-called—"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Search the Gospels, and the testimony of the Christ rings clear: "I am come, not to condemn, but to save the world; not to speak of myself, but of the Father—I am come to call the prodigal son, in the far off wilderness of sin, to the home of the Father which is in heaven. And for all who can receive this splendid gift of the divinity which will not disobey God's laws, there is prepared

the joy of salvation, for they have passed from death unto life. Such is the commencement of the perfect life, such is the inspiration of perfect truth, such is the true bread from heaven—for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world, and once again the assertion is made, "I come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

The simplicity of the proclamation became a stumbling-block and rock of offence for the religious people of the day: "The Jews then murmured at him and said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know; how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves; no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." But as the Master spoke of the mystical union of God with man, even his disciples murmured and said, "This is a hard saying, who shall hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the SON OF MAN ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." A. F. HILLS.

Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association.

SEVENTEENTH SESSION, 1888-89.

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